

APPLICATION NO PA/2018/711

APPLICANT Mr Coggon, Coggon Brothers Ltd

DEVELOPMENT Planning permission to erect an agricultural storage building

LOCATION Field No 7478 off North Street, West Butterwick

PARISH West Butterwick

WARD Axholme South

CASE OFFICER Emma Carrington

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION **Refuse permission**

REASONS FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE Member 'call in' (Cllr David Rose – significant public interest)

POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework: Paragraph 14 states that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking.

Paragraph 28 states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.

Paragraph 131 states that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 132 states that as heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 137 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

North Lincolnshire Local Plan:

Policy DS1 – General Requirements

Policy RD2 – Development in the Open Countryside

Policy LC14 – Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest

North Lincolnshire Core Strategy:

CS1 (Spatial Strategy for North Lincolnshire)

CS6 (Historic Environment)

CONSULTATIONS

Highways: No objections.

LLFA (Drainage team): Recommends a condition regarding a drainage strategy for the site.

Archaeology: The application site lies within the Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest of the Isle of Axholme (Local Plan Policy LC14).

This area is designated for its unique historic landscape retaining the pattern of medieval open strip fields and enclosures surrounding the villages on the Isle; the application site is located on the edge of the riverside ancient open strip fields north of West Butterwick village.

The Historic Environment Record recommends **REFUSAL** of planning permission as the development would adversely affect the character, appearance and setting of the historic landscape contrary to LC14 and Core Strategy policy CS6.

An alternative location for the agricultural building has been suggested.

PARISH COUNCIL

No response.

PUBLICITY

Site notice posted; no comments received.

ASSESSMENT

Planning permission is sought to erect a new potato storage building on land farmed by a local business established in 1981 (although the family have been farming in the area since the 1700s). This current application is a resubmission of an application that was refused under delegated powers (PA/2017/1124). The reason for refusal was:

'Insufficient information has been submitted with the application to demonstrate that there are no alternative sites available to the applicant than the current site of application, that will have a lesser impact on the Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest of the Isle of Axholme. The application, as submitted, is therefore considered to be detrimental to the character and the setting of the core historic landscape of the Isle of Axholme, the Ancient Open Strip Fields and Recent Enclosed Land, contrary to local plan policy LC14 and Core Strategy policy CS6. The proposal would not be in accordance with NPPF 131 or 137 as the proposed development would not make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, and would detract from the significance of the historic landscape at this

location. It is also considered that granting permission for an incursion into the LC14 zone in this location will make other applications more difficult to resist and result in further loss of this diminishing historic landscape character type.'

The site is located within the open countryside, in a sensitive location within the Isle of Axholme Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest.

The main issue in the determination of this application is, therefore, whether the proposal will have an adverse impact on the designated historic landscape.

As described above, the proposal is for a potato storage building with dimensions of 30 metres by 20 metres, 6 metres to eaves and 9.64 metres to ridge height. The application is on behalf of a long-established local employer, who makes a positive contribution to the local economy. The current potato storage buildings are located within the village and approximately 1 mile outside the village. For the business to remain sustainable, and eventually grow, the applicant considers that a new storage barn is needed in an improved location. The applicant has a number of areas of land that have been considered for the location of the potato shed, given that the land in their ownership all falls within a designated landscape area, namely the Isle of Axholme Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest. In total, nine sites have been identified as being possibilities, but eight have been discounted for various reasons as described in the design and access statement. The current site (Site 1) is the preferred option, which the applicant considers has the least impact on the historic landscape, and which will reduce traffic in and around the built-up area of the village. The applicant considers that the scale, design and location of the new building is acceptable, and that a new building in an agricultural setting will not affect the character of the area, particularly as there are other modern features in the area, with the M180 motorway cutting through the designated landscape. The building is modern in design to suit modern day working practices, and is typical of modern day agricultural buildings. However, as the site lies within a designated landscape, concern has been expressed by the Historic Environment Officer, that due consideration has not been given to all the suggested sites, and that there is a better site for the building, which would have a lesser impact in the historic landscape.

The council's historic environment officer has made the following comments:

'Policy

The application site lies within the Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest of the Isle of Axholme.

This area is designated for its unique historic landscape retaining the pattern of medieval open strip fields surrounding the villages on the Isle. This historic landscape is considered to be of national importance and local plan policy LC14 applies which states:

"Within this area, development will not be permitted which would destroy, damage or adversely affect the character, appearance or setting of the historic landscape, or any of its features"

"Development required to meet the social and economic needs of rural communities and....will be permitted provided such development is related to the historic landscape and its features"

“A high standard of design and siting in new development will be required reflecting the traditional character of buildings in the area and the character of the historic landscape, and using materials sympathetic to the locality.”

“Schemes to improve, restore or manage the historic landscape will be sought in connection with, and commensurate with the scale of, any new development affecting the area of Special Historic Landscape Interest.”

Policy LC14 is supported by the evidence of a detailed survey of the historic landscape character of the Isle of Axholme (Miller, K. 1997 *The Isle of Axholme, Historic Landscape Characterisation Project* Countryside Commission, Leeds; see:

<http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/historicenvironment-and-conservation/historic-environment-record/historic-landscape-character/>).

This detailed study identified significant areas of medieval open strip fields and turbaries, both of which are of considerable national importance. These attributes, together with the enclosed land and the overall settlement pattern of the area, make it unique in the country. The Lincolnshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project, 2011, also recognised this landscape as nationally important.

Core Strategy CS6 specifically refers to the importance of the Isle’s historic landscape and that the council will conserve its significance through **‘Safeguarding the nationally significant medieval landscapes of the Isle of Axholme (notably the open strip fields and turbaries)...’**

Local plan policies LC7, RD2, and RD14 also apply as the development is within the open countryside; policy LC7 Landscape Protection states **‘Development which does not respect the character of the local landscape will not be permitted’**.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also provides guidance to local authorities for conserving heritage assets and their settings, which includes historic landscapes. Paragraphs 128 and 129 require an applicant and local planning authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset). This assessment should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, and used to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness should be taken into account by local planning authorities when determining planning applications (NPPF, 131). Local planning authorities should also look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance (NPPF, 137).

Historic landscape significance

The historic landscape of the Isle is a heritage asset of historic and archaeological interest as defined in the NPPF, and is clearly identified as such in the local plan in line with paragraph 126 of the NPPF. The Ancient Open Strip Fields (AOSF) form the historic character core of the Isle of Axholme landscape.

The essential character and appearance of this core historic landscape type is of open unenclosed agricultural land and the lack of any physical boundary features, including hedgerows and fences; other characteristics of this landscape include the roads, common ways and access tracks known locally as meres; a general absence of farms in the open fields, these being located in the built-up settlement areas; and the presence of visual reference points such as church, mill and water towers that afford legibility to the core historic landscape and form part of its setting.

Also characteristic of the ancient open field landscape are areas of piece-meal enclosure, frequently found around the fringes of the open fields and the built-up settlements where they form the immediate setting of the core open strip fields. This 'Early Enclosed Land' (EEL) comprising enclosures of amalgamated strips are often characterised by irregular or sinuous boundaries.

Elsewhere enclosures with regular straight boundaries, frequently formed by ditches, were laid out in the newly drained landscape from the 17th century onwards. The enclosures of this 'Recent Enclosed Land' (REL) are largely devoid of upstanding boundary features, and maintain the characteristic open aspect of this historic landscape, even where such enclosures are combined into blocks of large modern fields.

The persistence of these elements of the historic landscape, and the resultant openness of the core areas, remains the dominant characteristic of the contemporary landscape of historical importance. This remnant landscape is acknowledged as the best example of very few surviving landscapes of this type in the country. It is of national significance, however is not capable of formal designation as a heritage asset under current legislation.

Assessment

The application site lies on the edge of the Ancient Open Strip Fields that extend in a narrow band north of West Butterwick alongside the River Trent, bordered to the west by Recent Enclosed Land (REL). This block of land displays many of the classic landscape features of the AOSF and REL fields described above.

The application site is an agricultural field accessed from the road via a farm track through the strip field zone. None of the fields in this block are enclosed and there is no roadside hedge. This allows for long uninterrupted views across the open landscape to the west, encompassing distant blocks of trees, whilst to the north the motorway encloses and frames the view. The approach into West Butterwick from Beltoft to the west also provides fine views across the open landscape towards the application site. There are no other buildings within this part of the landscape zone adjoining the open strip fields. This setting, comprising the openness of the landscape and lack of buildings within the fields surrounding the village, can also be appreciated when travelling westbound on the M180 bridge over the River Trent.

The proposal is for a typical modern agricultural storage building, measuring 30m x 20m and 9.64m to the ridge height, occupying the corner of the field northwest of the access track.

The applicant has consulted the HER pre-application and is aware of the sensitivity of the historic landscape in this location, referring to the issue in their Design and Access Statement. Alternative sites within and around the village in their ownership have been

considered (see Appendix 1, D&A Statement) and the applicant considers that the proposed location is the least damaging option.

The HER has assessed each of the alternative sites, with a basic map regression exercise and reference to the historic landscape character zones mapped by the 1997 survey. A site has been identified that is within the applicant's ownership to the southwest of the village, which would be a suitable alternative location for an agricultural storage building. Ordnance Survey mapping for 1888, 1908 & 1945 reveals there was a farmstead here known as Newland Farm. The farm was demolished at some time in the post-war era. The site of the farmstead was included in the 2014 Lincolnshire Farmstead Mapping project and is recorded on the HER and the Heritage Gateway (HER25695).

Newland Farm was sited on the eastern edge of the area known as Newlands that was drained and first farmed after Parliamentary Enclosure in the Isle in 1795; it overlooks the Riverside AOSF beside the Trent. As there was an historic farmstead in this location for perhaps fifty to a hundred years, it suggests that this would be an acceptable location for a new storage barn within the historic landscape and I would not object to an application for such a building here.

The applicant's preferred location at the application site is in a highly sensitive location within the open historic landscape close to the village, where there are no existing or sites of former buildings. Having visited the application site, the proposed building would be highly visible in the otherwise open historic landscape where there are few, if any upstanding boundary features, and few scattered trees in the wider view.

The building would be seen across the fields on the approach into West Butterwick. The building would be seen across the fields on the approach into West Butterwick from Beltoft and from the road travelling north out of the village; it would also be visible as an isolated building from the elevated motorway bridge. Also, there are a number of public footpaths through this part of the historic landscape where the building would be highly visible; one route passing within 200m of the proposed building.

Furthermore, because the building is to be used for potato storage and is set back within the block of fields, it is likely to result in an increase in farm traffic along the access track creating dust (and noise) in the landscape. It is unclear if the track would need to be upgraded but this may have impact.

As the applicant acknowledges, screening of the building in this location is not appropriate as it would not be characteristic of the open landscape. As such, the proposed building would be clearly visible as an isolated building in an otherwise open, unoccupied area of the historic landscape. It would be an intrusive element, detrimental to the flat, open character of the historic landscape character. It would also affect the setting and amenity value of the historic landscape.

Because of this it would adversely affect both the existing character and setting of the nationally important remnant historic landscape. As such the proposed building in this location would be an unacceptable encroachment in the Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest.

The application should therefore be **REFUSED** as detrimental to the character and the setting of the core historic landscape of the Isle of Axholme, the Ancient Open Strip Fields and Recent Enclosed Land, contrary to local plan policies LC14 and Core Strategy policy

CS6. The proposal would not be in accord with NPPF 131 or 137 as the proposed development would not make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, and would detract from the significance of the historic landscape at this location.

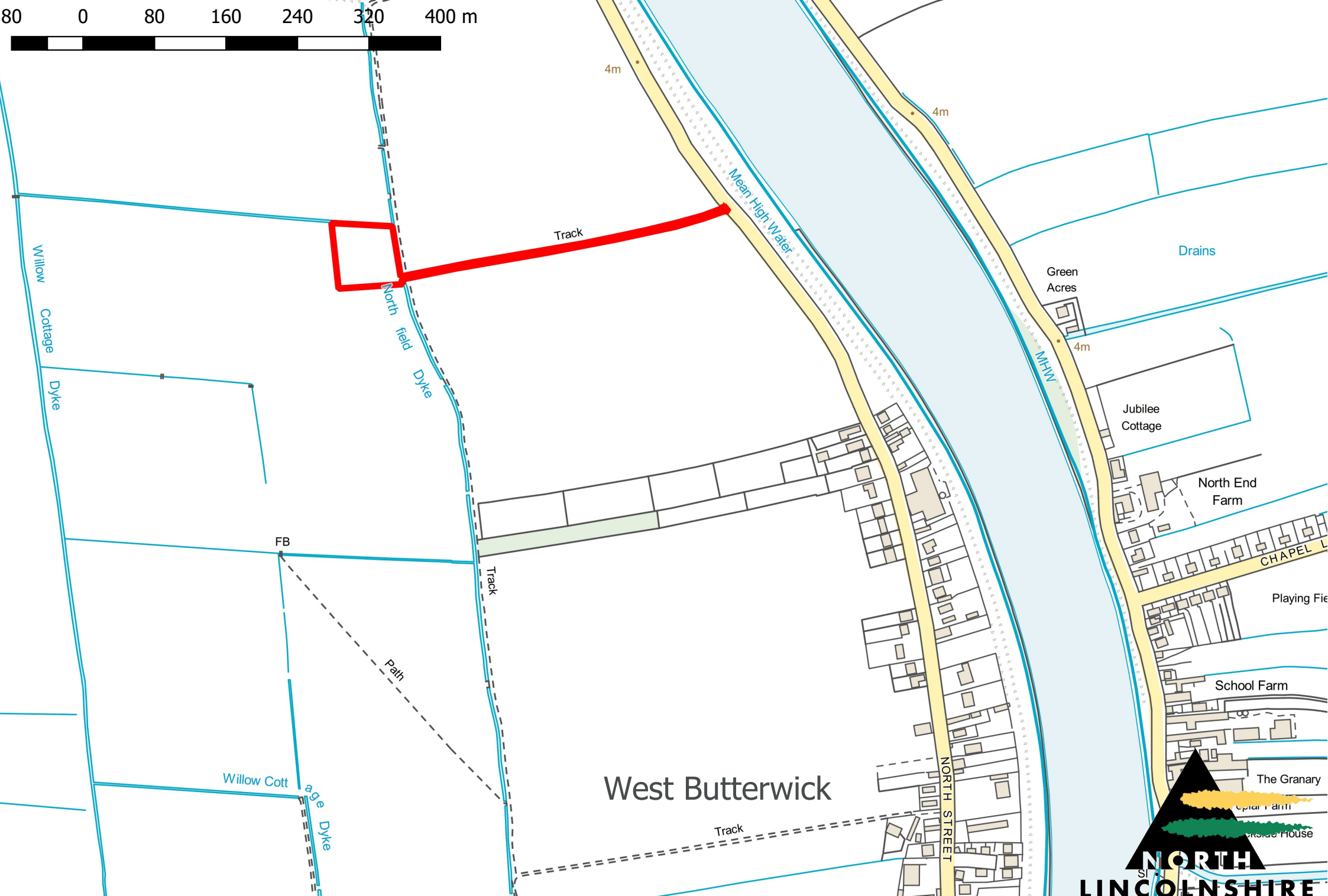
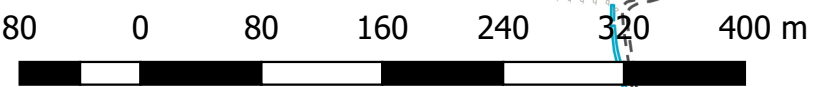
The HER also consider that granting permission for an incursion into the LC14 zone in this location will make other applications more difficult to resist and result in further loss of this diminishing historic landscape character type.'

On balance therefore, it is considered that the impact on the historic landscape currently outweighs any benefits to the social or economic benefits that a development of this nature and scale would bring to the area, and the applicant has failed to convince the council that there is sufficient justification to demonstrate that the development would not result in harm or significant loss to the irreplaceable heritage asset. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to policies in the adopted local plan and core strategy, and guidance in the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse permission for the following reasons:

1.

Insufficient information has been submitted with the application to demonstrate that there are no alternative sites available to the applicant than the current site of application, that will have a lesser impact on the Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest of the Isle of Axholme. The application, as submitted, is therefore considered to be detrimental to the character and the setting of the core historic landscape of the Isle of Axholme, the Ancient Open Strip Fields and Recent Enclosed Land, contrary to local plan policy LC14 and Core Strategy policy CS6. The proposal would not be in accordance with NPPF 131 or 137 as the proposed development would not make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, and would detract from the significance of the historic landscape at this location. It is also considered that granting permission for an incursion into the LC14 zone in this location will make other applications more difficult to resist and result in further loss of this diminishing historic landscape character type.



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